

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

At page 1 of the Specification, please replace the third full paragraph (bridging to page 2) with the following amended paragraph:

As the negative-working photosensitive composition which can form an image using the solid laser or semiconductor laser capable of emitting infrared light, a photosensitive composition comprising an alkali-soluble resin (such as a novolak resin), a ~~compound which causes a crosslinking reaction~~ crosslinking agent crosslinkable by an acid (an acid crosslinking agent such as a resol resin), a compound which generates an acid by heating (an acid generating agent), and a photothermal converting agent (an infrared absorber such as a dye or pigment) is proposed in Japanese Unexamined Patent Application, First Publication No. Hei 7-20629 A.

At page 3 of the Specification, please replace the heading "DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION" after the second full paragraph with the following heading:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

At page 4 of the Specification, please replace the first full paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

That is, a negative-working photosensitive composition of the present invention is characterized by comprising (a) an alkali-soluble resin, (b) a ~~compound which causes a crosslinking reaction~~ crosslinking agent crosslinkable by an acid, (c) a compound which generates an acid by heating, and (d) a photothermal converting agent, wherein the compound (c) which generates an acid by heating described above is an onium salt of an acidic dye having a sulfonic group in the molecule thereof.

At page 4 of the Specification, please replace the heading "BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION" after the third full paragraph with the following heading:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

At page 5 of the Specification, please replace the third and fourth full paragraphs with the following amended paragraphs:

The ~~compound crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~ is not particularly limited, as long as the ~~compounds crosslink agent crosslinks~~ with the alkali-soluble resin (a) or ~~crosslink crosslinks~~ with the ~~compound crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~, by catalysis of an acid generated from the compound (c) which generates an acid by heating, described below, and can make the alkali-soluble resin (a) or the ~~compound crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~, insoluble with respect to an alkali developer.

As an example of the ~~compound crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~, mention may be made of, for example, an amino compound having at least two groups from among a methylol group, an alkoxymethyl group, an acetoxymethyl group, and the like. As specified examples thereof, mention may be made of, for example, melamine derivatives, urea resin derivatives, resol resins, and the like, such as methoxymethylated melamine, benzoguanamine derivatives, or glycoluril derivatives.

At page 5 of the Specification, please replace the sixth full paragraph (bridging to page 6) with the following amended paragraph:

The amount of the ~~compound crosslinking agent (b) used which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~ preferably ranges from 5 to 70% by mass with respect to the solid content of the negative-working photosensitive composition. In addition, two or more kinds of the ~~compound crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~ may be simultaneously employed, if necessary.

At page 16 of the Specification, please replace the second full paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The employed amount of the compound (c) which generates an acid by heating preferably ranges from 0.01 to 50% by mass, and, in particular, preferably ranges from 0.1 to 20% by mass, with respect to the solid content of the negative-working photosensitive composition. If the employed amount of the compound (c) which generates an acid by heating is less than 0.01% by mass, it is not possible to expect sufficient generation of an acid required to crosslink the alkali-soluble resin with the ~~compound-crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~, or crosslink the ~~compounds-crosslinking agent (b) which cause a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~, themselves. On the other hand, if the amount exceeds 50% by mass, the solubility in a developer of the non-image portion is drastically reduced.

At page 29 of the Specification, please replace the second full paragraph, entitled "Example 1," with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in the composition table of Table 1, 5.0 g of a m-cresol novolak resin(N-13P, manufactured by Eastman Kodak Company) as an alkali-soluble resin (a), 3.5 g of a resol resin (Phenolite ZF-7234, bisphenol A type, manufacture by DAINIPPON INK & CHEMICALS Co., Ltd.) as a ~~compound-crosslinking agent (b) which causes a crosslinking reaction by an acid~~, 0.6 g of 3-methoxy-4-diazo-diphenylamine Acid Green 25 salt as a compound (c) which generates an acid by heating, 0.6 g of a cyanine dye A represented by Formula (VIII) described below and 0.2 g of a cyanine dye B represented by Formula (IX) described below as a photothermal converting agent (d), and 0.6 g of DC 190 (a 10% solution, manufactured by Eastman Kodak Company) as a surfactant were dissolved in a solvent consisting of 45.0 g of methylcellosolve and 45.0 g of methyl ethyl ketone, thus producing a coating solution of a negative-working photosensitive composition.

At page 32 of the Specification, please replace the first full paragraph with the following amended paragraph:

The produced photosensitive planographic printing plate was subjected to laser exposure by means of an exposing machine comprising a near infrared semiconductor laser mounted therein (Trendsetter, manufactured by Creo) (wavelength: 830 nm, laser power: 8 W, revolution speed: 140 rpm). The optical density (a) of the unexposed part and the optical density (b) of the exposed part were measured by means of an optical densitometer, RD-917 (manufactured by Macbeth Co. , Ltd.). The color difference was calculated in accordance with the equation, $\Delta OD = (b) - (a)$. The results are shown in Table 3.

At page 34 of the Specification, please replace the second full paragraph, under the heading "INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY," with the following amended paragraph:

As described above, the negative-working photosensitive composition of the present invention comprises (a) the alkali-soluble resin, (b) ~~the compound which causes a crosslinking reaction~~ crosslinking agent crosslinkable by an acid, (c) the compound which generates an acid by heating, and (d) the photothermal converting agent, and the compound(c) which generates an acid by heating described above is an onium salt of an acidic dye having a sulfonic group in the molecule thereof. For this reason, superior storage stability is exhibited, ablation at the time of exposure can be controlled, and a coating film having good visible image properties at the time of exposure can be obtained.